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Conference Abstract

Unmounted Doesn't Mean Unprocessed: A Case Study of Exporting Australian Herbarium Specimens

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Abstract

In 2017, two incoming international herbarium loans were confiscated and destroyed by the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR). Following these regrettable incidents, communication has improved between Managers of Australasian Herbarium Collections (MAHC) and Plant Import Operations Branch of DAWR. The outcome is that new protocols now exist for shipment of plant material between herbaria based on the recognition by DAWR that all herbarium specimens are in fact processed (pressed, dried and frozen) even if they are not fully mounted (Brown *et al*, this conference). Simultaneously, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) had been reported to be destroying incoming unmounted specimens, thus making it difficult to send unmounted exchange material overseas, and particularly to the USA.

Using the documentation developed for incoming overseas loans by MAHC and, encouraging the receiving institution in the USA to acquire a USDA 588 Importing Permit for unprocessed plant specimens (non-loan, unmounted herbarium specimens), it was possible to export unmounted herbarium specimens and dried DNA samples into the USA. Excluding the USA specific requirements, we were also able to export exchange material and dried DNA samples to Singapore and Sweden.

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Keywords

Australia, quarantine, export, herbarium, USDA, poster

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